

**The Lesser Prairie-Chicken
Range-Wide Conservation Plan:
A new pathway to work with industry or a forgotten trail**



**Presented:
Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Sage grouse Habitat Conservation Advisory Council
Helena, Montana, August 13-14, 2013**

Describe a framework to work with industry and landowners to preclude the need to list the lesser prairie chicken (LPC) and/or reduce regulatory burden on producers and industry operating in LPC habitat



Lesser Prairie Chicken: What and where is it?

- Member of the grouse family
- Endemic species found only in a 5 state region
- Habitat needs are large tracts of open grasslands



The lesser prairie-chicken needs relatively intact grasslands and prairies to thrive. Over time, habitat loss, modification, degradation and fragmentation within the species range have contributed to a range-wide population decline



Range-wide Plan Conservation Plan

- Preclude listing
- Retain state responsibility for the LPC
- Broad, stakeholder-driven process
 - 70+ stakeholder meetings, 3 WAFWA public comment periods, & 3 FR comment periods

The Lesser Prairie-Chicken (*Tympanuchus pallidicinctus*) Range-wide Conservation Plan



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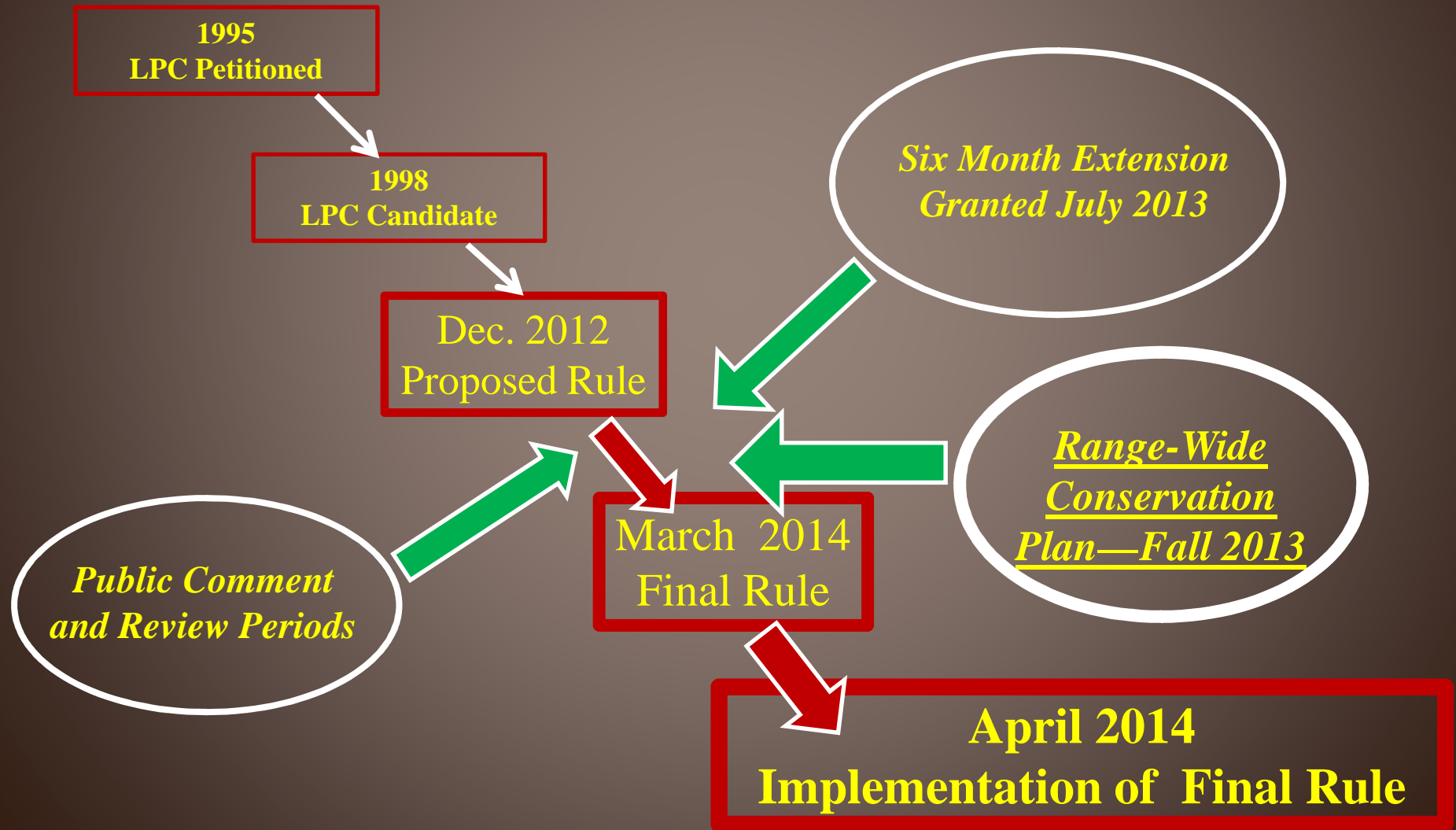
Sean Kyle, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Jim Pitman, Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism
David Klute, Colorado Parks and Wildlife
Grant Beauprez, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
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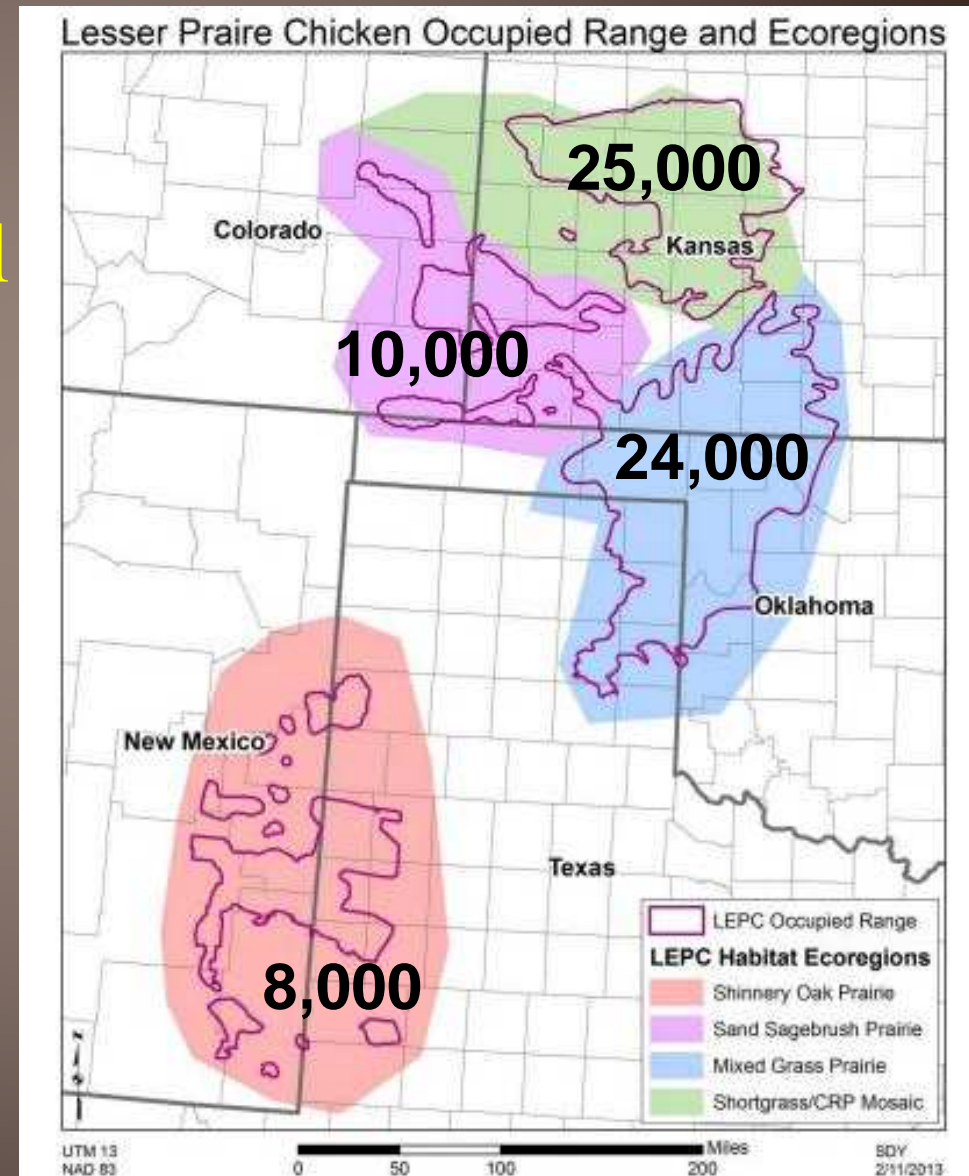
July 2013

Listing Timeline and Opportunities to Affect that Process



LPC Range-wide Plan will deliver certainty of effective conservation efforts

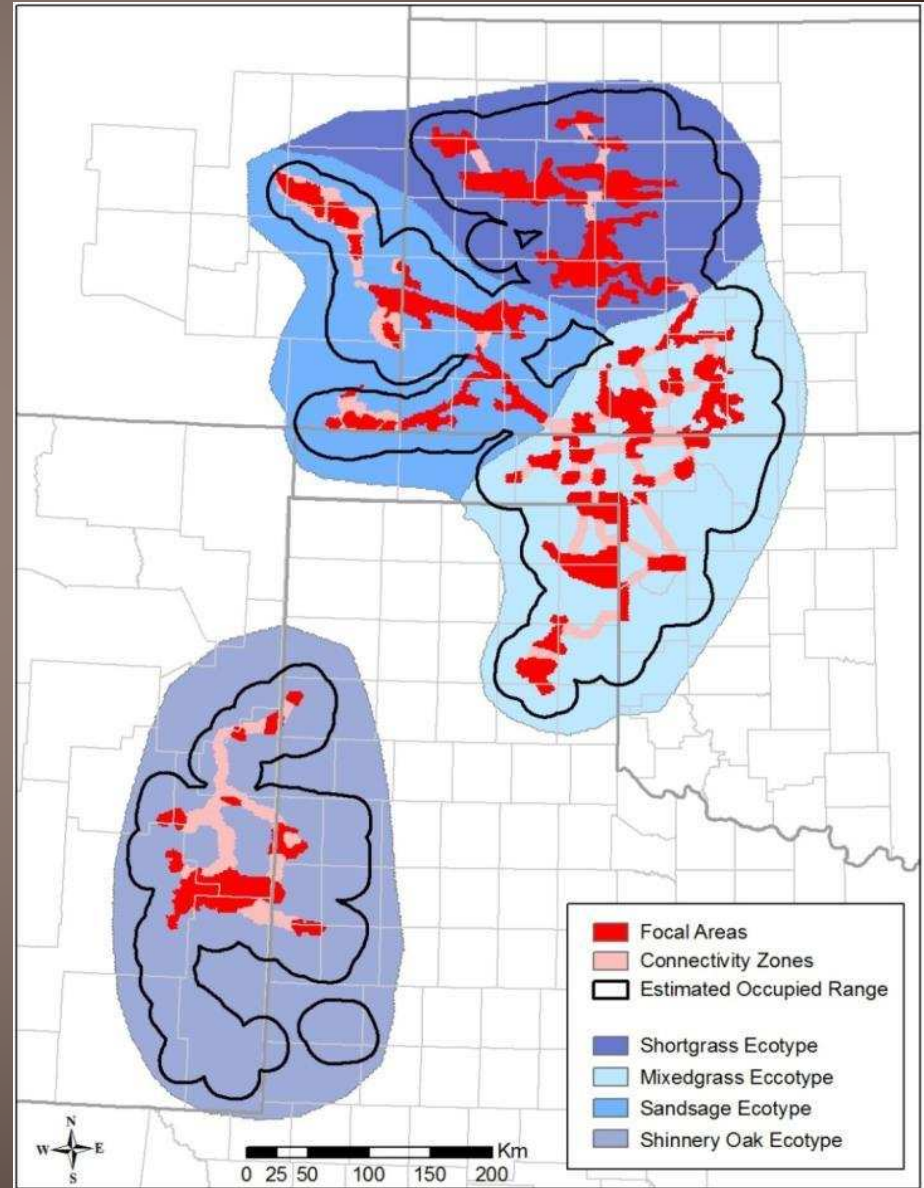
- Science Team identified ecoregional population goals
- Goals are 10 year averages
- 67,000 birds
- 2X the 2012 population estimate



Range-Wide Habitat Goals

- Focal areas and connectivity zones identified
- Population-based, attainable habitat goals
- Targeted management efforts

Room for LEPCs and development within the region



Habitat Focal Areas

- Guidelines developed by LPCIWG Science Team
- Manage for 75% of LPC population goals within HFAs
- Goal of 70% high-quality habitat within HFAs
- Based on assumed 5 – 10 birds/sq mi
- Draft based on known leks, LPC habitat, O&G, wind, transmission
- Goals on about 35% of the current range of the species



Connectivity Zones

Define on a site-specific basis, but where possible with:

- Desired maximum length of 20 miles
- Desired minimum width of 5 miles
- Desired goal of 40% suitable habitat
- Not just a corridor



Southern Great Plains CHAT

Produced by LPCIWG, PLJV and WGA

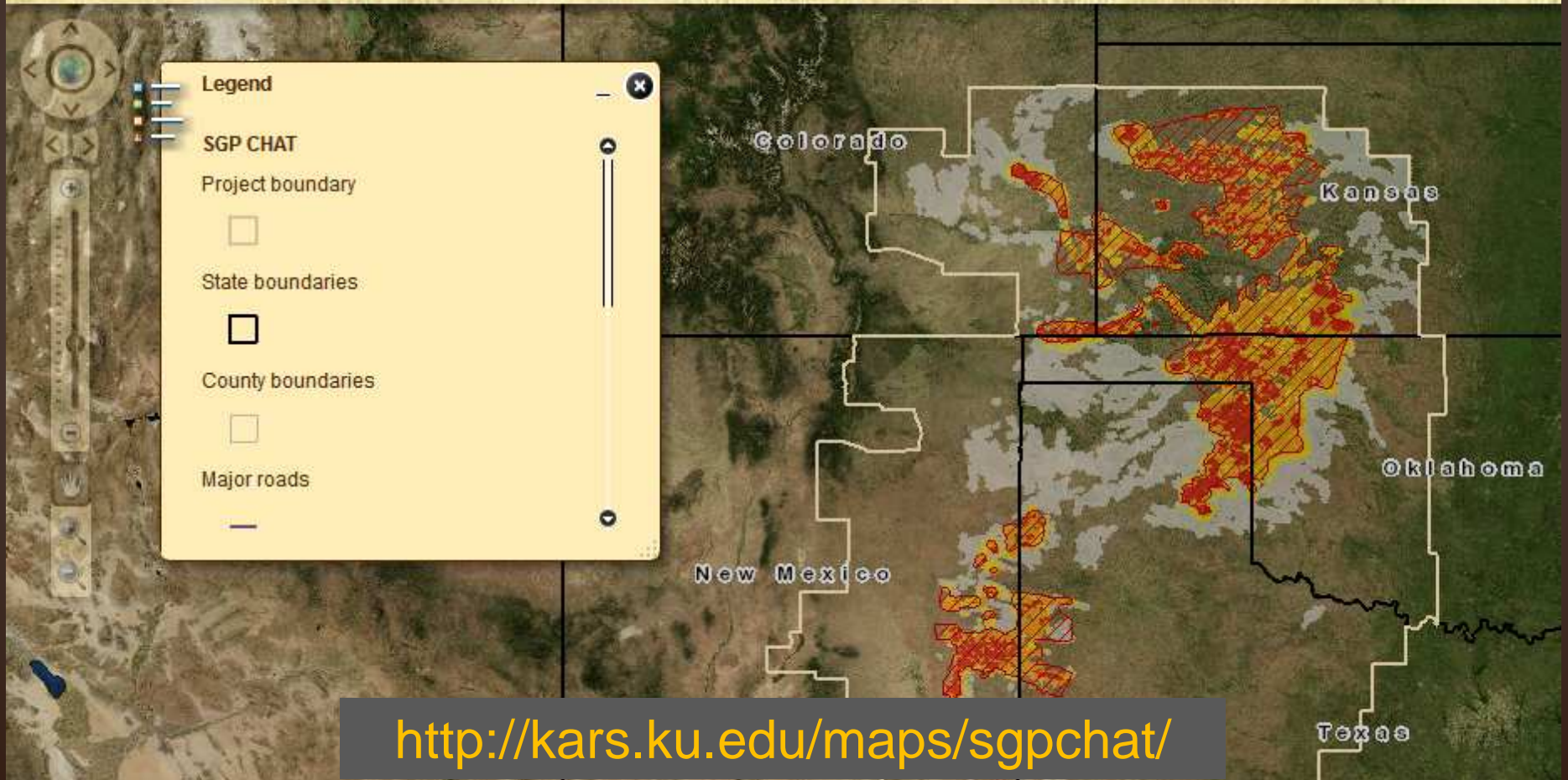


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Project Home Page

Southern Great Plains Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool (SGP CHAT)

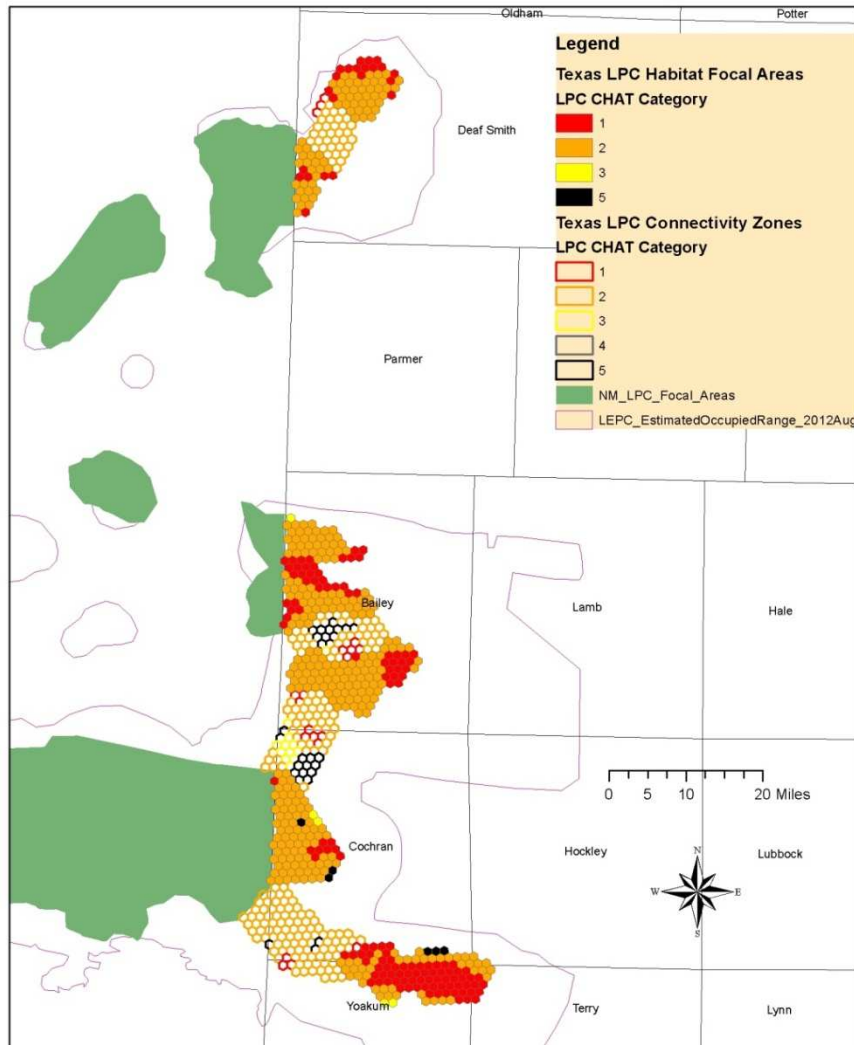


<http://kars.ku.edu/maps/sgpchat/>

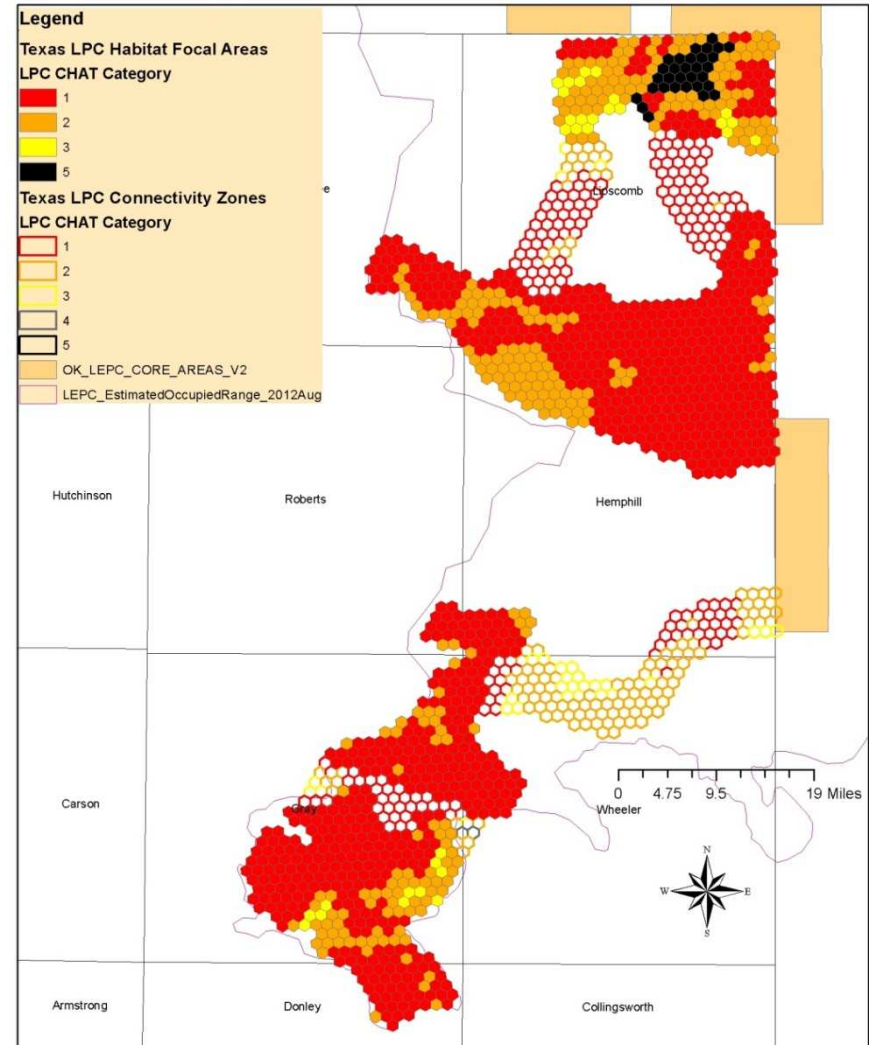
LPC Conservation delivery: WGA

SGP-CHAT

Texas Shin Oak Prairie Region
LPC Habitat Focal Areas and Connectivity Zones



Texas Mixed Grass Prairie Region
LPC Habitat Focal Areas and Connectivity Zones



WAFWA Voluntary Mitigation Framework

- For all industries that impact the LPC
- Simple, consistent metrics
- Costs structure based on USDA habitat management costs
- Funds a non-wasting endowment for conservation delivery



**The plan is the umbrella to unify all LPC
conservation programs**



**State and Federal
Habitat
Conservation
Programs**

**Farm Bill
Conservation
Programs**

**Mitigation of
Impacts for all
Industries**

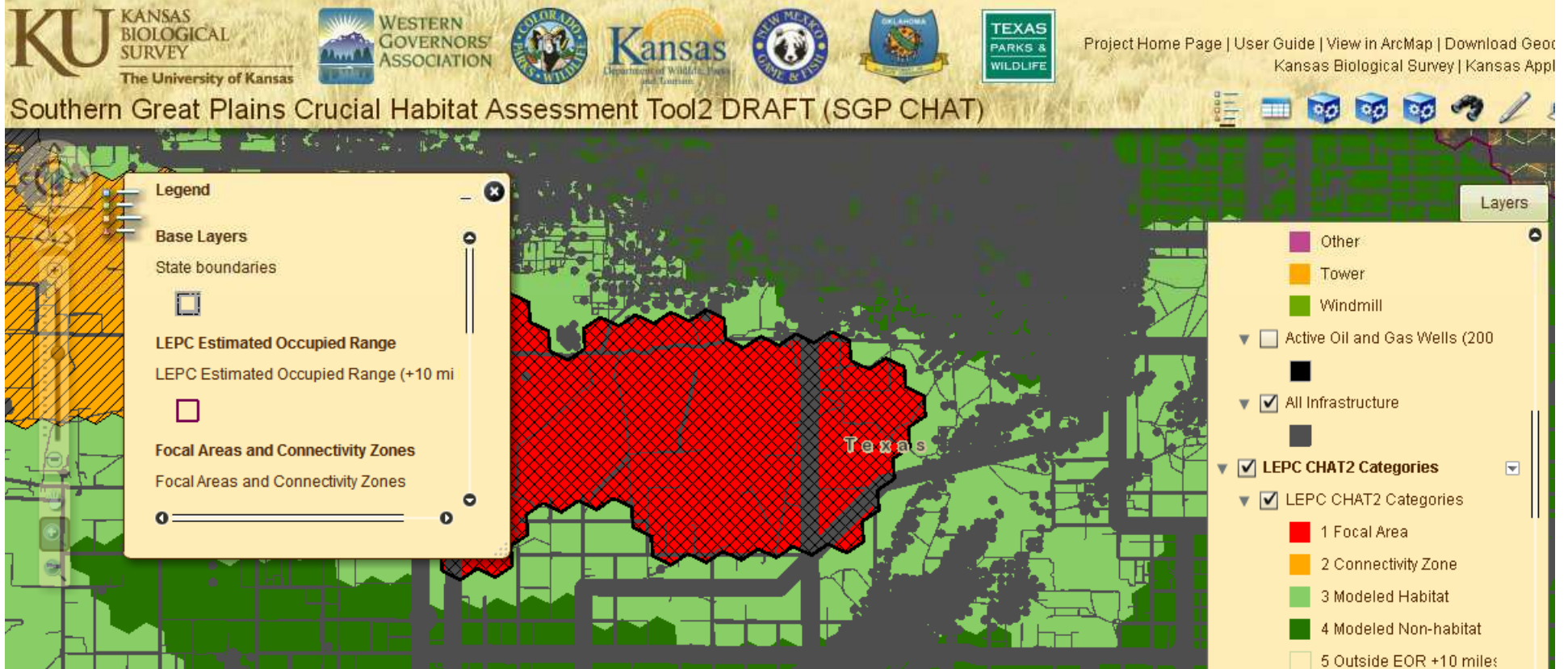
Benefits of Range-Wide conservation by WAFWA

- Known development costs
- Low participation costs
- Low administration costs
- Direct conservation benefit



CHAT 2 Revision

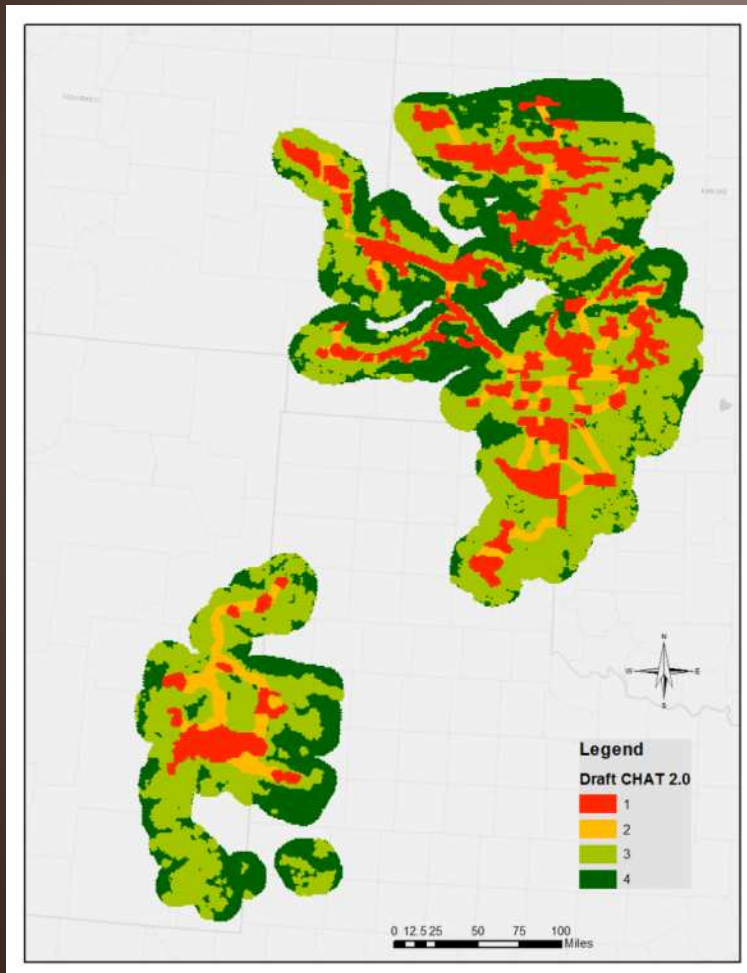
Targeting of Conservation Programs and Industry Sighting Tool



Release Date: August 7, 2013

WAFWA Monetary Valuation of Habitat Units

Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool (CHAT)



CHAT Category	Unit Costs (range-wide avg.)	Practice Cost Basis (based on USDA rates)
CHAT 1	\$48.12	110-135%
CHAT 2	\$40.70	105%
CHAT 3	\$36.24	85-100%
CHAT 4	\$32.36	75-90%

<http://Kars.Ku.edu/maps/sgpchat/>

Actions Necessary for Success

- Maintain state authority for LPC management.
- Addresses threats in the proposed rule and creates a pathway to 'not-warranted' decision or timely delisting
- Maintain SGP-CHAT and implement business plan for streamlined permitting.
- Voluntary and incentive-based conservation is key to continued partnerships with landowners and industry



Find the LEPC Range-wide Conservation Plan at:

http://www.wafwa.org/html/prairie_chicken.shtml



Thank you!

